rity forces after the withdrawal of waging war case against Jodhpur undertrials.

Exploitation of Tobacco growers by traders in Andhra Pradesh

1031. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tobacco traders agreed to pay the guaranteed price to the tobacco growers who are raising the crop on black cotton soil;

(b) whether it is a fact that the tobacco traders failed to honour the commitment in regard to purchase of tobacco at the time of auctions held at Guntur in Andhra Pradesh on 3rd April, 1989;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the officials of the Tobacco Board were marking 70 per cent to 80 per cent of high grade tobacco as mixed grades; and

(d) if so, what steps Government propose to take to prevent farmers from being exploited by traders?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. R. DAS MUNSHI): (a) The tobacco traders agreed to pay guaranteed price to the tobacco growers before raising the crop in black cotton soils. The price guaranteed to the growers was Rs. 16.50 per kg. for F1 grade and Rs. 15.50 per kg. for F2 grade. The overall average price agreed for black soil tobacco was Rs. 14.00 per kg.

(b) In a meeting held in New Delhi on 30-3-89 the traders agreed to pay Rs. 20.50 per kg. F1 grade and Rs. 19.50 per kg. for F2 grade. The auctions started with this understanding from 3rd April, 1989. Due to delay in passing of the instructions by the traders to their representatives at the auction, platforms the commitment could not be honoured on the first day. However, from 4th April, 1989 onwards the traders started implementing the commitment in respect of only the best graded brighter varieties tobacco. Slightly inferior quality tobacco fetched lower prices.

(c) No, Sir. Only 31.89 per cent of high grades were sold as mixed grades as on 14-4-89.

(d) In order to arrest the declining trend in the prices the STC has been requested to step into the market and buy grades of tobacco as part of their commercial operations.

Illicit cultivation of Ganja in Tamil Nadu

1033. SHRI YALLA SESI BHUSHANA RAO: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that illicit cultivation of Ganja has been noticed on a large scale in the hill ranges of Tamil Nadu;

(b) whether it is also a fact that ganja plants are being cultivated on fertile Government land in inaccessible areas;

(c) whether there is any official connivance in the cultivation of ganja in the reserve forest land; and

(d) what steps Government have taken to check illicit cultivation of ganja in the forest areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI AJIT PANJA): (a) to (d) Illicit cultivation of ganja has come to the notice in the inaccessible hilly areas of Idukki district of Kerala and Uchalathu Mettu in Madurai district of Tamilnadu (bordering Idukki district). During 1988, ganja plants in 1,187 acres were destroyed in various operations conducted for the purpose. In the recent operation code-named, 'Operation Green House' from 17th to 19th March, 1989, conducted at Kambakkal valley in Kerala, ganja plants in 652 acres were destroyed.

While intelligence gathered indicate illicit cultivation of ganja in Poramboke forest,